

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 3 and 8. **Please also amend** claims 1, 6, and 11, and **add** new claim 17, as shown in the complete list of claims that is presented below.

1. (currently amended) A reproducing apparatus comprising:
 - an input terminal for inputting audio digital data including a sequence of data blocks each of which consists of a predetermined number of units of data;
 - a thinning-out unit for thinning out part of the audio digital data on a data block basis; and
 - a conversion unit for varying the amplitude of either a sequence of units of data including the last unit of data of a data block immediately preceding a thinned data block or a sequence of units of data including the first unit of data of a data block immediately following the thinned data block, so that the last unit of data of the immediately preceding data block will be concatenated with the first unit of data of the immediately following data block along a smooth amplitude-varying curve,
 - wherein the amplitude-varying curve is calculated to a simply increasing or decreasing function, and
 - wherein the simply increasing or decreasing function is determined on the basis of the difference between the amplitude of the last unit of data of the data block immediately preceding the thinned data block and the amplitude of the first unit of data of the data block immediately following the thinned data block, the amplitude of the units of data of which the amplitude is to be varied in the immediately following data block, position information of the units of data, and the number of units of data in the sequence of units of data.

Claims 2 and 3 (cancelled).

4. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said conversion unit integrates the sequence of units of data the amplitude of which has been varied.

5. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the units of data of each data block are compressed audio data, each data block further includes header information from which the first unit of data of the data block is obtained, and units of data following the first unit of data are decompressed on the basis of the immediately preceding unit of data of the data block.

6. (currently amended) A reproducing apparatus comprising:

an input terminal for inputting audio digital data including a sequence of data blocks each of which consists of a predetermined number of units of data;

a thinning-out unit for thinning out part of the audio digital data on a data block basis;

a conversion unit for varying the amplitude of either a sequence of units of data including the last unit of data of a data block immediately preceding a thinned data block or a sequence of units of data including the first unit of data of a data block immediately following the thinned data block, so that the last unit of data of the immediately preceding data block will be concatenated with the first unit of data of the immediately following data block along a smooth amplitude-varying curve; and

a reproducing unit for reproducing both the units of data converted by said conversion unit and units of data not converted by said conversion unit,

wherein the amplitude-varying curve is calculated according to a simply increasing or decreasing function, and

wherein the simply increasing or decreasing function is determined on the basis of the difference between the amplitude of the last unit of data of the data block immediately preceding the thinned data block and the amplitude of the first unit of data of the data block immediately following the thinned data block, the amplitude of the units of data of which the amplitude is to be varied in the immediately following data block, position information of the sequence of units of data, and the number of units of data in the sequence of units of data.

Claim 7 and 8 (cancelled).

9. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said conversion unit integrates the sequence of units of data the amplitude of which has been varied.

10. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the units of data of each data block are compressed audio data, each data block further includes header information from which the first unit of data of the data block is obtained, and units of data following the first unit of data are decompressed on the basis of the immediately preceding unit of data of the data block.

11. (currently amended) A reproducing apparatus comprising:
an input terminal for inputting audio digital data including a first sequence of data blocks each of which consists of a predetermined number of units of data, the predetermined number being the same for all of the data blocks in the first sequence;
a thinning-out unit for removing data blocks from the first sequence to form a second sequence of data blocks, the data blocks in the second sequence having been separated in the first sequence by the removed data blocks; and
a conversion unit for varying the amplitude of units of data adjacent boundaries between the data blocks of the second sequence so as to smooth transitions between the data blocks of the second sequence, the conversion unit comprising means for varying changing the amplitude of the units of data adjacent one of the boundaries in each data block of the second sequence so that the changed-amplitude units of data vary as accordance with a monotonic increasing or monotonic decreasing function. function,
wherein the monotonic increasing or decreasing function is a function of at least the difference in amplitude of units of data between the last unit of data in a data block on one side of said one of the boundaries and the first unit of data in a data block on the other side of said one of the boundaries.

Claim 12 (cancelled).

13. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the function is a linear function.

14. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the units of data are uncompressed audio data.

15. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the units of data are compressed audio data.

16. (previously presented) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the first sequence of data blocks has about twice the number of data blocks as the second sequence, the second sequence being formed by removing every other data block from the first sequence.

17. (new) A reproducing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the monotonic increasing or decreasing function is additionally a function of the amplitudes of the changed-amplitude units of data, position information of the units of data, and the number of units of data in the sequence of units of data.